permanent ban in case of persistent abusive practices) for engaging recovery agents on those banks where strictures have been passed/penalties have been imposed by a High Court/Supreme Court or against its Directors/Officers with regard to the abusive practices followed by their recovery agents.

Discrimination against SC/ST in the SBI

1145. SHRI GANDHI AZAD: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of action taken on letters received from VIPs in the Ministry/State Bank of India about discrimination against Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes in the Bank;

(b) whether All India Association for SC/ST & Physically Handicapped has been approaching from 16th December, 2006 on the grievances of SC/ST Bank Employees;

(c) if so, the details of action taken thereon;

(d) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the number of representations of SC/ST employees pending with the Bank on such issue?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) State Bank of India (SBI) has reported that it is following the Guidelines issued by the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions, Department of Administration Reforms & Public Grievances regarding letters received from VIPs.

(b) to (e) SBI had received one letter in December, 2006 from the President of All India Association for SC/ST & Physically Handicapped alleging discrimination against SC/ST Employees/Officers of the Bank in the matter of their transfers and postings. It was also alleged that several SC/ST Clerks/Cashiers were not being posted nearest to their native places especially in Rajasthan region.

The Government has laid down broad guidelines for transfer and posting of bank employees. It is reported by the SBI that in the case of holders of Group 'C' & 'D' posts those who have been recruited on regional basis and who belong to Scheduled Tribes are being posted near their native places within the region, as far as possible and subject to administrative constraints. However, so far as those belonging to SC/ST in Group 'A' & 'B' are concerned, the SBI has informed that it may not be possible or desirable to lay down that such employees who have all India transfer liability should be posted near their native place only.

Foreign exchange Reserve

1146. SHRI AMIR ALAM KHAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any assessment has been made with regard to the foreign exchange reserves in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the amount of foreign exchange reserves at present;

(c) whether Government proposes to utilize any percentage of the foreign exchange reserve on the creation of infrastructure in the country;